

**Francis Bacon,
Bryan Pearce & Art Now Cornwall**

Spring 2007

3 February – 13 May 2007

Notes for Teachers

Contents

Introduction	3
Tate Resources & Contacts	4
Ways of Looking – Questions to Ask of Any Artwork	5
Art Now Cornwall	6
St Ives All Round: The Paintings of Bryan Pearce	10
Modernism in St Ives	13
Francis Bacon in St Ives	16
Bernard Leach and his Circle	19
Helen Feiler: Capriccio	21

Introduction

The Spring 2007 displays present the following;

Art Now Cornwall (Gallery 1, Lower 2 and the Studio)

This exhibition includes 28 artists living and working in Cornwall today. The display includes paintings, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, performance, film and video and reflects the rich diversity of practice in Cornwall.

St Ives All Round: The Paintings of Bryan Pearce (Gallery 3 and the Apse)

This exhibition brings together works from public and private collections of the St Ives artist Bryan Pearce. Best known for his paintings of his hometown, this exhibition celebrates Pearce's unique vision characterised by simple renditions of space, light and colour.

Modernism in St Ives (Gallery 4)

In Gallery 4 there is a new display of works from the Tate Collection by artists associated with St Ives. This includes Barbara Hepworth, Ben Nicholson, Patrick Heron and Peter Lanyon. Also included is a work by Karl Weschke to complement the Francis Bacon display.

Francis Bacon in St Ives (Gallery 5)

This small display brings together paintings and drawings by Francis Bacon made during the period 1957-62. Now seen as a key transitional period in the artist's career, it also coincided with Bacon's residency at Porthmeor studios in St Ives.

Bernard Leach and his Circle (Upper Gallery 2)

Ceramics by Bernard Leach and key studio potters who worked alongside him can be seen in Upper Gallery 2. These works form part of the Wingfield-Digby Collection, recently bequeathed to Tate St Ives.

Helen Feiler : Capriccio (Showcase, by Gallery 5)

New work by Helen Feiler is on display in the Showcase to the left of the entrance to gallery 5. Feiler, who is based in Newlyn, creates sculptural jewellery combining precious metals to echo the natural qualities found in stones, crystals and fossils.

How to use this pack and structure your visit

The aim of this pack is to provide information about the artists whose work is exhibited, an exploration of key themes and suggested activities. The pack should help you create an introductory discussion about some of the issues raised by the current displays. It can be used to help focus work in small groups in the exhibition, and to allow follow-up within the classroom.

Tate Resources

There is an **Exhibition Study Point** on Level three that has a selection of books relating to the exhibitions. You can access the **Tate Collection databases online** at this point. The **Tate Shop** has a selection of books, catalogues, postcards and related materials.

Websites

Tate online www.tate.org.uk

Tate Learning www.tate.org.uk/learning

This site includes the Staff Room, a dedicated area for teachers and group leaders.

Teacher resource notes for all major Tate exhibitions including, Tate St Ives and past Turner exhibitions, can be downloaded from the site.

Tate Tools www.tatetools.com is a growing library of teaching resources for Key Stages 2 & 3 of the National Curriculum. Tate Tools offer high quality learning to support the art curriculum. Annual fee of £90 plus VAT.

Tate Teachers www.tate.org.uk/learning/teachers for continuing professional development.

Contacts

General enquires and group bookings

+44 (0) 1736 791114

tsi.education@tate.org.uk

Susan Lamb, Head of Education and Public Programmes

+44 (0) 1736 791116 susan.lamb@tate.org.uk

Kerry Rice, Education Officer

+44 (0) 1736 791114 kerry.rice@tate.org.uk

Tate publications have produced a series of **Key Work Cards for Teachers** including *Landscape & Environment*, *Portrait & Identity*, and *Sculpture & Installation*. For an order form call 01736 791114

The **St Ives Archive Study Centre** holds a range of material about artists associated with St Ives.

Tel: +44 (0) 1736 796408, e-mail: archive@stivetrust.co.uk

www.stivetrust.co.uk/archivesite

Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden

Tel: +44 (0) 1736 796226

Barnoon Hill, St Ives, Cornwall, TR26 1AD

Group bookings: +44 (0) 1736 791114, tsi.education@tate.org.uk

Ways of Looking

Questions to ask of any work

Personal responses – what do you bring to the artwork?

What are your first reactions to the work?
What is the first word that came into your head when you saw it?
What do you notice first?
Does it remind you of anything?
What do you think the artist wants to communicate?

Looking at the artwork – what can you see?

What materials and processes has the artist used to make the artwork?
What is it? (Is it a film, photograph, drawing, sculpture, installation, performance etc.?)
Where is it? Describe the space. Does it link with other artworks in the exhibition?
How big is the artwork? What effect does scale have on the artwork and our relationship to it?
Is it time-based? If so, describe what happened and how long it took. Is it repeated?

Subject and meaning – what is it about?

Is the artwork about a subject, issue or theme?
Is it about real life?
Could the work have a symbolic, moral or political meaning?
Is there a story or narrative within the work?
How does the work make you think about time?
Does it make you consider aspects of life or art in a new way?
Does the work have a title? Does this affect the way you see it?
What information is available in the gallery (e.g. wall text or caption)? Does this information affect or change the way you see it?

Art in Context – influences which shape the creation and reading of a work

Who is the artist? Do you think the background of the artist can inform us about why or how it was created, or what it might be about?
Was the artwork made for a particular location or event?
Does the artwork link to other works made by the artist?
How does the artwork link to work by other contemporary artists?
Does it connect to any art of the past?
What does the artwork tell us about the ideas and values of today's world?
How does it link or comment on contemporary social, cultural and political issues such as consumerism, globalisation and multi-culturalism?
Does the work make use of modern materials and technology or perhaps it re-invents age-old processes?

Art Now Cornwall

Art Now Cornwall is on display in Gallery 1, Lower Gallery 2, the Studio and ground floor Mall. This exhibition includes twenty-eight artists living and working in Cornwall today and has been selected by Tate St Ives director, Susan Daniel-McElroy and curator, Sara Hughes. The display includes paintings, photography, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, performance, film and video and reflects the rich diversity of practice in Cornwall. Artists included are Harriet Bell, Neil Canning, Richard Cook, Jessica Cooper, Andy Currie, Naomi Frears, Anthony Frost, Luke Frost, Delpha Hudson, Andy Hughes, Sax Impey, Matthew Lanyon, Jonty Lees, Amanda Lorens, Philip Medley, Richard Nott, Hadrian Pigott, Michael Porter, Ged Quinn, Iain Robertson, Jesse Smith, Mark Surrudge, Clare Wardman, Cathy Watkins, Andy Whall, Lucy Willow, Lisa Wright and Partou Zia.

Art Now Cornwall includes a wide range of work and provides a wonderful opportunity to discuss contemporary art. A suggested way to explore the exhibition would be to have a general look and then to focus on a few key works, such as the one discussed below. However, to start off and focus discussion, you could ask students the following icebreaker questions. Consider also the 'questions to ask of any work' included at the beginning of this pack.

Ice-breaker questions

- What are your first impressions of the exhibition?
- What do these artists seem to be interested in? (you could make a list)
- Do they share any common interests and concerns?
- What sorts of materials and processes do they work with?
- These artists draw on a range of sources. Can you identify some of them?
- All these works have been made by artists living and working in Cornwall. Do you they share anything in common which clearly identifies them with Cornwall today?

Key work

Lucy Willow

Dust to Dust 2007

Iron spangles, black dust, carborundum

Dimensions variable

© the Artist

Dust to Dust has been made in response to the particular environment of the gallery by sieving dust through a stencil made in fine netting fabric. It is an example of an installation piece, which is both fragile and impermanent. At the end of the exhibition this 'rug' will be swept away.

Lucy Willow is fascinated by the poetry of certain materials such as house and marble dust, both of which link to her thoughts on memory, death and impermanence. *Dust to Dust* links to an earlier piece where she used white marble dust to create an ornate floor rug. When an old rug is lifted it often reveals a trace or imprint in the dust. It is this idea that Willow is interested in exploring, together with ideas about the fragility and futility of prayer. Here she explores heavenly or celestial visions with images of angels inspired by William Blake.

For discussion

- Look closely at this work from all sides. What is it and how was it made?
- Why do you think it is called *Dust to Dust*?
- The artist is interested in prayer rugs. In what ways is this work different to a prayer rug?
- What do you think will happen to it at the end of the exhibition?
- Think of the phrase 'to sweep things under the carpet'. How might it be relevant to this work?

- Now look around the room. You will notice that all the works are very different. Can you find any that you could link in some way to *Dust to Dust*? Explain why/why not.

Key themes

Range of media and diversity of practice. From low-tech kinetic sculpture to state-of-the-art photography - from live performance to oil painting! This exhibition demonstrates the rich diversity of practice in Cornwall today. Consider the variety of interests and concerns of these artists and the range of media. Other materials include dust, earth, ash, plaster, wood, wax, steel, pencil, video and acrylic.

Whatever their chosen materials or subject, these artists all seem to be seeking a new way of working. In different ways they articulate a struggle with the language of art.

Global Cornwall. These artists do not convey a localised sense of place. In contrast to St Ives Modernism (see gallery 4), *Art Now Cornwall* demonstrates how artists working today think global. Geographical boundaries don't make sense in a world dominated by the internet. Consider the variety of references and source materials these artists make use of.

Memory and loss. At the end of this show Lucy Willow's rug will be swept away as if to emphasise that nothing is forever - only our memories. This theme of impermanence and loss can be found in a number of the works on display. There is an interest in memory and remembered experiences, feelings and objects. In some works this becomes an exploration of childhood memories and nostalgia. See, for example works, by Harriet Bell, Naomi Frears, Partou Zia, Matthew Lanyon and Lisa Wright.

Impermanence. A number of works on display are temporary installations or time-based video and live-performance work. These artists challenge us to consider that artwork can be impermanent, ever changing and ephemeral and this is reinforced by their use of materials such as ash, dust and plastic scraps. Amanda Lorens combines video and audio installation with live art in her work *Tango Privado 2007*, while Delpha Hudson's *Miss-Readings 2007* has been devised as an alternative tour at the Barbara Hepworth Museum.

The poetry of materials. These artists love to play with and transform materials. Just as Lucy Willow chooses dust other artists take often banal or waste materials and transform them into something funny, shocking or bizarre. There is something of the Surrealist twist to many of these works. For example, Andy Currie's 'scorpion' uses a strip of black plastic which dances randomly in a breeze generated by a fan recycled from a computer hard drive. Andy Hughes' photographs of beach detritus become strange alien creatures through tricks of scale and colour photography. Jonty Lees transforms a clay pigeon trap to throw out skimming stones in his film *Skimming Stones 2005* while Hadrian Pigott's video *Rifiuti 2005* records trapped plastic waste in the River Tiber in Rome.

Painting. This exhibition is an opportunity to explore the concerns and interests of painters working today and it demonstrates just how rich and alive the art of painting is! These painters continue to question and challenge the medium and language of paint and to engage with the tensions between figurative and abstract work. Explore the range of mark making, the delicious textures, the use of layering, striping and scraping back, the building up and surface revealing. Consider too how some of these painters make use of photography.

Visual fictions. Many of these artists seem to explore and play with stories. Some works explore nostalgia and childhood memories, while others are more playful and whimsical with their narratives. It is not always clear what is being told. Amanda Lorens uses dance to explore ideas about human relationships and boundaries in relation to obsession, intimacy, conflict, desire and sensuality. Harriet Bell's objects look like archaeological fragments that hint of past uses.

Light, water and landscape. Perhaps surprisingly, landscape is not a predominant subject for many of these artists, although you will find work that engages with the land, sea and air in unexpected ways. See for example the paintings of Clare Wardman who tackles the movement of light in her studio or Andy Whall's *In An Atlantic Wave 2006*, which he filmed underwater. Ged Quinn 're-mixes' Caspar David Friedrich's *Sea of Ice 1823-5* to question Romantic symbols in our post-modern world.

Dream spaces. The idea of the interior landscape and the free association of images in relation to imagination is something explored by a number of artists. Strange figures and objects are placed within timeless 'dream spaces' as if to evoke an elusive or visionary moment. Consider, for example, the works in the Studio which includes work by Harriet Bell, Naomi Frears, Lisa Wright and Partou Zia.

Suggested activities

World views. *Art Now Cornwall* gives us a taste of the concerns of artists working today. What is their view of the world? How is it different to the world of Barbara Hepworth, Bryan Pearce or Francis Bacon? Challenge students to create their own world view by, for example, combining words and images in collage work.

Transformations. Explore the idea of transforming materials, objects and images. On a simple level, students could make observational drawings of objects, which they then transform in some way. They could also explore Helen Feiler's work and develop their own jewellery designs based on transforming natural materials in some way. Alternatively they could gather found objects/materials to create temporary installations that incorporate ideas of change within them. This could extend to a wider study of installation art.

Surfaces, edges and unusual places. Some of these artists explore the land and sea in unexpected ways. Others concentrate on more dreamlike spaces. Explore their work and compare and contrast to earlier St Ives artists (see gallery 4) such as Barbara Hepworth, Patrick Heron and Peter Lanyon. Students could then use their visit to St Ives as the starting point for a range of work exploring these themes.

Glorious plastic! Many of these artists use or refer to waste materials. Beach detritus, especially plastic is a particular issue if you live in Cornwall. Students could develop their own work making creative use of or filming waste material. Extend to cross curricular work on environmental issues.

Art Now. Use the exhibition as a springboard to a study of contemporary art in the wider context. What are the concerns and issues of artists working today? What materials do they use? Look at other contemporary art exhibitions such as the Turner Prize, Tate Triennial, the Venice Biennale or Documenta.

Resources

Art Now Cornwall, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2007

www.andyhughes.net Andy Hughes

www.artsurgery.org Andy Whall and Delpha Hudson

www.documenta12.de Documenta 2007

www.gedquinn.co.uk Ged Quinn

www.jontylees.co.uk Jonty Lees

www.labiennale.org Venice Biennale 2007

www.lemonstreetgallery.co.uk Lemon Street Gallery, Truro

www.matthewlanyon.co.uk Matthew Lanyon

www.palp.co.uk Penwith Artist-led Projects

www.projectbase.org.uk Project Base

www.thenewmilleniumgallery.co.uk The New Millennium Gallery, St Ives

www.the-artists.org Information on a number of artists

www.saximpey.com Sax Impey

www.somervillegallery.co.uk Information on Luke Frost and Anthony Frost

www.stivessocietyofartists.com Information on Jesse Leroy Smith

www.tate.org.uk Information on the Turner Prize & Tate Triennial etc.

www.tideandtime.org.uk Information on Lucy Willow

Live performances of Amanda Loren's *Tango Privado* 2007 will be held on Saturday 3 February 12.30-14.30 and Sunday 4 February 12.15-13.45

Delpha Hudson will be performing her *Miss-Readings* 2007 at the Barbara Hepworth Museum on Saturday 3 February at 11.00 & 12.30 and Sunday 4 February at 13.00

Further reading

Anderson, Laurie, *Performance: Live Art Since the 1960s*, 2004, Thames & Hudson Ltd.

Berghaus, Gunter, *Avant-Garde Performance: Live Events and Electronic Technologies*, 2005, Pelgrave Macmillan

Buck, Louisa, *Moving Targets 2, A User's Guide to British Art Now*, 2000 Tate Publishing

Button, Virginia, New Revised Edition, *The Turner Prize*, 2005, Tate Publishing

Crary, Jonathan (editor), *Installation Art in the New Millennium: The Empire of the Senses*, 2004, Thames & Hudson Ltd.

Goldberg, Roselee, *Performance Art from Futurism to the Present*, 2001, Thames & Hudson Ltd.

Heathfield, Adrian (editor), *Live: Art & Performance*, 2004, Tate Publishing

Kaye, Nick (editor), *Site Specific Art: Performance, Place & Documentation, 200*, Routledge

Oliveira, Nicolas de, *Installation Art*, 1996, Thames & Hudson Ltd.

Rosenthal, Mark, *Understanding Installation Art, From Duchamp to Holzer*, 2003, Prestel

Stallabrass, Julian, *Art Incorporated: The Story of Contemporary Art*, 2004, Oxford University Press

Taylor, Brandon, *Art Today*, 2004, Laurence King Publishing

Warr, Tracey, *The Artists Body: Themes & Movements*, 2000, Phaidon Press

Weintraub, Linda, *Making Contemporary Art: How Today's Artists Think and Work*, 2003, Thames & Hudson Ltd.

St Ives All Round: The Paintings of Bryan Pearce

This exhibition celebrates the paintings of Bryan Pearce. It brings together works from public and private collections and focuses on Pearce's primary subject, St Ives (two portraits and two still lifes are also included). Pearce lived and worked in St Ives all his life and his paintings capture his hometown in his unique style that is characterised by simple renditions of space, colour and light. Seen together, these paintings record the town's subtle changes over the last fifty years, providing a fascinating visual document.

Bryan Pearce (1929 – 2007) was born in St Ives. He was born with phenylketonuria; a rare metabolic disorder that went undiagnosed and resulted in restricted development of his brain as a child. Pearce began painting in the early 1950s due to the encouragement of his mother who was soon to become the manager and promoter of his professional artistic career. Between 1953 and 1957 Pearce attended the St Ives School of Painting, where Leonard Fuller supervised him. By 1959 he was showing work with the Penwith and Newlyn Societies of Artists. In 1970 Pearce moved from Market Place, St Ives to the Piazza flats, which have spectacular views across Porthmeor Beach. In 1973 he took over a Porthmeor Studio where he worked most days (except Sundays) for the rest of his life. Sadly Pearce passed away just weeks before the opening of this exhibition.

Key work

St Ives Harbour (all round) No. 4 1966

Oil on board

Private collection

This painting shows St Ives harbour with boats and it is an example of one of Pearce's 'all round' paintings. The overall effect of this sunlit picture is one of calm; St Ives and its harbour are depicted as a haven of peace and tranquillity.

It is as if Pearce is taking us on one of his regular walks around the town exploring every nook and cranny regardless of scale and perspective. We start in the right hand corner with the church upside down, moving along Wharf Road, past the fishermen's cottages and out to Smeaton's Pier. Pearce did not consider there to be a 'correct way up' and often turned his board while working. The effect of inverting some of the buildings is to create an extraordinary birds-eye view of the town curling round the harbour. As Peter Lanyon once said, Pearce painted 'what has happened with a blue sea and green grass and side-seen houses and around-corner looks'.

Pearce has used his familiar palette, which is dominated by yellow ochre outlines. This colour evokes the warm granite of the buildings and contrasts with the grey windows, blue sea and sky and the stronger reds, browns and greens of buildings and boats. The artist has placed his striking signature centrally within the harbour walls as if to reinforce this sense of being within the scene.

For discussion

- Look closely at this painting. Where do you look first? Take your eyes on a journey around this painting exploring every detail.
- What has happened to some of the buildings? Why do you think Pearce painted them like this?

- This is a painting of St Ives harbour. Do you recognise anything? Describe the type of day and weather conditions?
- Imagine you had never been to St Ives. What ideas of the town would you get from this painting?
- When do you think this painting was made? Are there any clues?
- Now look around at the other paintings by Pearce in this room. What aspects of St Ives is Pearce interested in? Can you describe the way he paints and the colours he likes best?

Key themes

Directness. Pearce's paintings are striking for their formal simplicity, freshness of light and originality of colour. They are simple renditions of space, colour and light, although this clearly belies a sophisticated understanding of composition. His colours convey the essentials about a tree, building, boat or sea. He flattens out perspective and plays with scale to produce an extraordinary sense of rhythm and surface design.

Outline paintings. Pearce's working method was to start by 'mapping out' his subject with a line drawing in light pencil, usually in situ. Back in the studio he would then work over this drawing with a fine brush, usually with yellow ochre. Only then would he add the colour working on each painting for four-five weeks.

An idyllic sense of place. Pearce's paintings are often described as serene and peaceful. He conveys a sense of place that could be considered idyllic and untroubled. His paintings do not include much human activity, vehicles or dramatic weather. There are no clouds, waves or shadows. These paintings are a synthesis of Pearce's immediate observations and his memories. In this way they become both extraordinarily vivid but also timeless. It is as if Pearce is enrapt or enchanted by the town. And here his particular personal situation, combined with his natural artistic abilities, has resulted in a remarkable study of one place. As Janet Axten writes 'he is using the only method he knows to communicate his world to others – and the centre of that world is St Ives'.

Images of St Ives. What is the appeal of St Ives? We all know it through the work of its artists, including Bryan Pearce. Such images have become part of the town's identity. What is it about the essence of this historic fishing village that Pearce seems to capture in his paintings? And how does the reality of life and work in St Ives relate to these images?

Visual documents. Although Pearce's paintings appear timeless they do record a specific time and place. He knew his hometown intimately and he has unconsciously recorded the town's subtle changes. In this display we can spot St Ives under snow, buildings that are no more and buildings newly built, including Piazza flats and the new lifeboat station.

Childlike charm. Pearce's paintings have a freshness and directness about them that has led some people to wrongly describe them as 'childlike'. He could be described as innocent or naive in the sense that painting was vital to Pearce's own sense of self and his art was untouched by external cultural influences or desires. He worked alone and with no interest in other artists.

Alfred Wallis and Cornish primitives. Pearce is often associated with another so-called 'Cornish primitive' Alfred Wallis (1855-1942). Both artists painted images of St Ives, both were essentially untrained and both share a style that disregards conventional rules of perspective and composition. It was this quality of the 'untutored eye' that was so admired by artists such as Ben Nicholson, Christopher Wood, Barbara Hepworth and Wilhelmina Barn-Graham who championed Wallis in the 1930s and 1940s. However, and in contrast to Pearce, Wallis' paintings always included some aspect of narrative or drama. See gallery four where you can compare and contrast Pearce with Wallis and other St Ives artists.

Suggested activities

Take a line for a walk. Encourage students to make bold line drawings from direct observation. Ask them to imagine the idea of taking a line for a walk – using it to meander over the landscape or objects in view. This activity works well in lower-gallery two where students can look at the view from the huge curved window or you could go down to the beach or into town.

All round views. Look closely at Pearce's 'all round' paintings and his painting *St Ives from the Tate Gallery Restaurant* 1999. Invite students to create their own 'all round' of Tate St Ives, combining the rooms, artwork and views. Make sure they visit all areas of the gallery including the Roof Terrace and Lower Gallery 2. Alternatively students could base their pictures on a walk around St Ives or their own local environment. Ensure students find places where they can climb up and look down upon their chosen location.

Pattern and repetition. Develop print or textile work inspired by a visit to this exhibition. Consider how everything is pictured as if a component of still life in Pearce's paintings. Discuss the effect of using bold outlines, the repetition of pattern and the placement of strong colours next to each. Activities could range from simple linocuts using craft foam or block-stamp printing to stencils for screen prints or embroidery work. Research other artists with whom Pearce is often compared, such as George Braque, Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse.

Mosaics. Pearce's technique of flattening perspective and creating an overall sense of pattern and rhythm has led his work to be compared to Roman mosaics. Students could develop mosaic work using a variety of materials such as felt tips and cut-out coloured paper or textile, collage and ceramic work.

St Ives past and present. Explore the history of St Ives through visual images (including gallery four), linking to geography or history work. Invite students to research and record St Ives through drawing, photography and written work.

Landscape/a sense of place. Students could create artwork based on places that they strongly identify with. Encourage them to create their own record of the place by taking photographs or making a film, making sketches and collecting objects. Extend to research artists past and present who have made extensive studies of one place such as John Constable, Claude Monet, John Park, Peter Lanyon, Richard Long, Tacita Dean or Jem Southam.

Further reading/ resources

Bryan Pearce, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2007

Bryan Pearce & his artist friends, published by Janet Axten, 2004

Axten, Janet, *Bryan Pearce, The Artist and his work*, Samson & Company, 2000

Stevens, C.J., *The Miracle of Bryan Pearce*, John Wade Pub., 2004

Modernism in St Ives

A new display of works from the Tate Collection explores the story of Modernism in St Ives in gallery four. The display includes work by Wilhelmina Barns-Graham, Terry Frost, Naum Gabo, Barbara Hepworth, Roger Hilton, Ben Nicholson, Patrick Heron, Peter Lanyon, Denis Mitchell, Marlow Moss, John Tunnard, Alfred Wallis and Bryan Wynter. Also included is a work by Karl Weschke to complement the Francis Bacon display.

Key work

Karl Weschke

Body on the Beach 1977

Oil on canvas, 173 x 130 cm

In this painting a body is lying flat out, face up on a beach. The sky and landscape behind are very dark. Weschke painted this in his studio in Cape Cornwall describing the theme of the painting as 'a person in the ultimate situation of distress'. Apparently it related to a personal experience when Weschke had once been diving for lobster pots and he was forced to make an emergency ascent from 120 feet beneath the surface of sea. His companion placed him on the beach to recover and he said he felt 'like a piece of meat'.

Karl Weschke (1925 - 2005) was a German-born painter who was based in West Cornwall for more than forty years. In 1942 he served in the German air force before being taken prisoner in Holland and transferred to a POW camp in Britain in 1945. After the war he decided to stay in England hoping to become a sculptor. Over the next five years he lived in Scotland, Spain, Sweden and London. The only formal art training he received was a term studying sculpture at St Martin's School of Art in London. Gradually he found his attention drawn to painting. In 1955 Weschke moved to Cornwall, initially basing himself in Zennor near St Ives, but then moving to Cape Cornwall where he lived for the rest of his life. Weschke became a member of the Penwith Society in 1957 and had his first solo show at the New Vision Gallery in 1958. He went on to exhibit widely and receive a number of major awards.

For discussion

- Discuss your first responses to *Body on the Beach*. Can you find words to describe the mood or atmosphere of the painting?
- What do you think has happened to the body? Could you make up a story?
- Compare this painting with others in gallery four. Is Weschke's painting the only one that includes a figure?
- Now look at Francis Bacon's paintings in gallery five. Can you make any links between Weschke's painting and these works?
- How good are you at describing works? Go back to gallery four and find a work that catches your eye – look at it closely. Can you find words to describe it?
- Now glance around the whole room again. What sorts of things are these artists interested in? Make a list.

- This display creates some striking ‘conversations’ between works. Choose two works that you feel speak to each other in some way (they might share characteristics or they might be strongly contrasting) and explain to the group why.

Key themes

Landscape and environment. Weschke’s solitary figure evokes a sense of isolation. The bleak landscape and dark colours reinforces this feeling. Notice how many of the artists in this display explore and depict their environment. There is a seascape by Alfred Wallis and landscape by Ben Nicholson. There is also more abstract work by Peter Lanyon, Bryan Wynter and Paul Feiler who capture their sensation or experience of place rather than a view of the landscape. Many works demonstrate an emotive response to the colour, light, textures, surfaces and materials of the natural world.

Seasonal colour. The muted colours in this room are particularly striking. Many of the artists have used a palette dominated by dark browns and greys. It feels like Cornwall in winter! Contrast this to the bright summery paintings of Bryan Pearce (gallery three) or the heightened colour of Patrick Heron’s *Horizontal Stripe Painting: November 1957 - January 1958* 1957-8 in gallery four.

Stories. In contrast to Bryan Pearce, who offers us a very literal narrative of his hometown, many of the artists here weave stories and drama into their work. We are invited to puzzle over Weschke’s body on the beach, the boats in Wallis’s *P.Z. 11* circa 1928, or the strange objects in John Tunnard’s *Tol Pedn* 1942.

Abstraction. This room shows how many of the artists associated with St Ives in the twentieth century explored abstraction. It includes a range of paintings, sculptures and reliefs by artists who have in various ways developed an abstract language. It provides a good introduction to the ways artists use line, colour, transparency, shape and form to play with the illusion of space.

Space. These artists explore and describe space in different ways. All the works play with pictorial space and illusionism often denying traditional perspective and depth. They create a sense of space and surface tension through colour, light, line, form, surface, relief, construction and texture.

Paint and processes. The display embraces a wide range of materials and techniques. There is a great variety of mark-making and texture. Explore the painting techniques of artists such as Alfred Wallis, Peter Lanyon, Patrick Heron and William Scott. Look also at the constructions and sculptures by artists such as Naum Gabo, Barbara Hepworth and Denis Mitchell.

Movement. In contrast to Weschke’s painting, where the figure evokes such a strong sense of rigidity, many of the other works convey a sense of movement. Consider for example, the feeling of energy in the paintings of Lanyon, Frost and Wynter or the sculptures of Denis Mitchell and Naum Gabo.

Suggested activities

Pattern, shape and detail. Encourage students to explore the works in gallery four and to create a series of sketches based on details from the paintings and sculptures. Talk about the striking contrasts between geometric and organic forms, between angle and curve, strong and soft colour.

2D/3D. This activity could be a development of the above whereby they use their sketches as the basis for paintings that they then transform into relief and sculptures. Encourage them to experiment with the sensations of space, light and movement. Students could then make drawings and paintings of their work to transform them back to two dimensions.

Views of St Ives. All the works in gallery four are by artists historically linked with St Ives. Consider what story it tells us about St Ives and its art. If you link this display to the Bryan Pearce exhibition it could provide the focus for a wider project looking at the history of St Ives and could include a visit to the Barbara Hepworth Museum. Ben Nicholson's painting *1943-45 (St Ives, Cornwall)* 1943-5 is on display so you could just focus on views of St Ives.

A dramatic sense of place. Students could create artwork based on places that they strongly identify with. Encourage them to create their own record (using all their senses) of the place by taking photographs, making a film or audio recording, making sketches and collecting objects. Encourage them also to consider how a sense of drama or narrative might heighten their sense of place.

Abstracting from nature. Develop drawings and collage work based on observation and the collection of materials and objects from the natural world. Invite students to make a series of paintings or drawings gradually abstracting or distilling the patterns and forms.

Further reading / resources

Karl Weschke

Karl Weschke Beneath a Black Sky, Essay by Frank Whitford, Tate St Ives, 2004

Lewis, J *Karl Weschke Portrait of a Painter*, Cape Cornwall, 1998

St Ives

Homecoming The Pier Arts Centre Collection at Tate St Ives, Essay by Andrew Dalton, 2003 Axten,

Janet, *Gasworks to Gallery: The Story of St Ives*, Tate Gallery, 1995

Berlin, S *Alfred Wallis: Primitive*, London, 1949

Cross, Tom, *St. Ives and British Modernism*, 1999.

Cross, Tom, *Painting the Warmth of the Sun, St Ives Artists, 1939-1975*, Penzance, 1984

Davies, Peter, *St Ives Revisited – Innovators and Followers*, Old Bakehouse Publications, 1994

Gale, M & Stephens C, *Barbara Hepworth: Works in the Tate Collection*, Tate Publishing, 1999

Gardiner, M *Barbara Hepworth, a Memoir*, Salamander Press, 1982

Hammacher, AH, *Barbara Hepworth*, Thames and Hudson, 1968 Revised Edition, 1987

Barbara Hepworth, A Pictorial Biography, Tate Publishing 1970. Reissued 1985

Mullins, E, *Alfred Wallis: Cornish Primitive*, London, 1994

Lax, Julian, *St. Ives. Eighty Years of Modernism*, 2001

Phillips M & Stephens C, *Barbara Hepworth Sculpture Garden*, Tate Publishing, 2002

Oldham, Alison, *Everyone was Working, Writers and Artists in Post War St Ives*, Tate St Ives/Falmouth College of Art, 2001

Rowe, Matthew, *John Wells*, Tate Gallery publication, 1988

Thislewood, D (Ed), *Barbara Hepworth Re-considered*, Tate Liverpool, 1996

Val Baker, Denys, *Britain's Art Colony by the Sea*, Samson and Co, 1959

Whybrow, Marion, *St Ives: 1883-1993: Portrait of an Art Colony*, Woodbridge, 1994

St Ives 1939-64, Twenty-Five Years of Painting, Sculpture and Pottery, Tate Gallery, 1985

The St Ives Artists Series, Tate Publishing includes: *Terry Frost, Barbara Hepworth, Patrick Heron, Roger Hilton, Bernard Leach, Janet Leach, Alfred Wallis, Bryan Wynter and Christopher Wood*.

Tate publications have produced a series of **Key Work Cards for Teachers** including *Landscape & Environment*. For an order form call 01736 791114

The **St Ives Archive Study Centre** holds a range of material about artists associated with St Ives.

Tel: +44 (0) 1736 796408, e-mail: archive@stivestrust.co.uk

www.stivestrust.co.uk/archivesite

Francis Bacon in St Ives

In gallery five there is a small display of paintings and drawings by Francis Bacon. The display highlights Bacon's work between 1957-62 - an important transitional phase for the artist. It was also during this period when Bacon spent time in St Ives.

Francis Bacon has long been regarded one of the leading painters of the second half of the twentieth century. Famous for re-defining figure and portrait painting, famous for merging image and paint to make the idea and technique inseparable.

Bacon's works from the period 1957-62 have been dismissed in the past in favour of his earlier work of the late 1940s to mid 1950s or his monumental mature work. However, on re-examination they reveal a key stage in Bacon's career and a period of experimentation and re-orientation.

Included in this display are works Bacon painted while he was using No. 3 Porthmeor Studios in St Ives, which he rented over the winter of 1959-60. Although it is not clear why Bacon chose to spend time in St Ives he clearly used his time productively and painted a number of works in preparation for his first show with Marlborough Fine Art in March 1960.

Francis Bacon (1909–92) was born in Dublin of English parents. Bacon spent time in Berlin and Paris in the late 1920s before settling in London. He initially worked as an interior decorator before taking up painting. Self-taught, Bacon destroyed most of his early work and rarely exhibited until after the War. In 1944 he painted *Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion*, which was acquired by the Tate in 1953. 1945-50 Bacon frequently stayed in Monte Carlo and in the late 1950s he frequently visited Tangier. He had his first one-man exhibition in London in 1949 and his first retrospective in London in 1955. From the late 1950s Bacon had many international exhibitions including a series of retrospectives in New York, Paris, London, Stuttgart and Berlin.

Key work

Reclining Woman 1961

Oil on canvas 198 x 141.5cm

Tate

In this painting a figure appears to be reclining on a sofa set against a red floor and blue wall. There are various ambiguities both in terms of the unusual pose of the figure and the space. In fact the androgynous figure has been cut from another canvas and the background setting can be seen as a series of horizontal bands rather than a defined interior space.

Reclining Woman demonstrates Bacon's experimentation with colour and paint handling and his attempt, at this time, to find a solution to the lack of coherence between figure and ground. Bacon had abandoned his earlier ghostlike figures and shadowy box-like spaces for a new sense of colour and space. The unusual pose was possibly inspired by a sculpture *Iris, Messenger of the Gods* c. 1895 by Auguste Rodin. Bacon was also known to admire Rodin's drawings of the nude figure.

This painting is similar to *Lying Figure*, 1959 and *Lying Figure No. 2*, 1959, both which were painted during Bacon's stay in St Ives. It can also be closely related to Bacon's works of paper *Reclining*

Figure, No. 1 c.1961 and *Reclining Figure, No. 2* c. 1961. These latter works rather than being studies are most likely to be composition variations after the completion of the painting.

For discussion

- What is unusual about this figure?
- Where is this figure? Describe the space and colours around it?
- Look closely at the paintwork. Can you find words to describe the variety of ways Bacon handles paint?
- Now look at some of the other paintings and drawings in this room. Can you find other works that are very similar?
- What would you say are Bacon's main concerns as a painter? Make a list.
- Bacon was once described as creating 'solemn art'. Would you agree?
- A range of archive materials have been included in the display. In what ways does this material add to your understanding of Francis Bacon's work?

Key themes

Bacon in St Ives. Why did Bacon come to St Ives? What impact did it have on his work? In many ways Bacon stood in opposition to everything that St Ives stood for. Bacon was a metropolitan artist interested primarily in the figure. By the late 1950s St Ives was internationally associated with abstraction.

The human body. Bacon's main interest as a painter was the human figure. As seen in this display he was preoccupied with the nude and portrait. The majority of his figures are male and were derived from photographic and art historical sources such as the photographs of Edward Muybridge and the paintings of Michelangelo. Later his paintings were derived from the photographs he commissioned primarily of his partner George Dyer. He did paint some female nudes and he also painted numerous self-portraits. It has been suggested that the androgynous figures seen in some of the paintings here may in fact be based on Bacon's own body.

The impact of paint. Bacon's technique is unique. He smears and wipes the paint to create images that are at once mysterious and shocking. Described as an artist who understands the visceral use of paint he explores the impact of paint upon our senses.

Colour field painting. Bacon was clearly interested in how colour fields could evoke a sense of space against which he could put a figurative motif. And it was during his period in St Ives that he began to articulate space through the arrangement of strongly coloured planes. This has led people to discuss the possible influence of the American artists such as Mark Rothko and Barnett Newman. Bacon was familiar with their work from the exhibition *New American Painting* at the Tate in 1959. It is also known that he was a friend of Patrick Heron and no doubt saw Heron's so-called stripe paintings during his time in St Ives (see gallery four).

Karl Weschke. The German-born painter based near St Ives, Karl Weschke was one artist who did respond to Bacon's presence in St Ives. It is known that the two artists became friends and they shared an interest in a rather bleak view of humanity and a visceral approach to paint. Weschke's move away from purely abstracted landscape to focus more on the figure may well have been in part due to Bacon's influence. See Weschke's *Body on the Beach* 1977-8 included in the *Modernism in St Ives* display in gallery four.

Suggested activities

Stretched faces. Students could make self-portraits using large convex and concave mirrors. If the mirrors are placed in the gallery students could include background details of the space and artwork to create strange distorted images.

Camera phone portraits. Invite students to take photographs of their friends with their camera phones. Use these images to then develop 'disfigured' portrait paintings or drawings.

The figure. Francis Bacon's figures always look half-dead or half-alive. Explore the way he describes the body through pencil and paint. What happens to the figure when Bacon paints it? What happens to his portraits? Why did he talk about human flesh as meat and why do people describe his painting process as violent? This exhibition could be the starting point for a range of work exploring the figure in art – themes could include: the life model, the nude, the body in movement, body portraits, figure/ground relationships and self-portraits.

Extend to a wider study of the figure in art. For example, look at some of Bacon's heroes such as Michelangelo, Diego Velasquez, Edgar Degas, Auguste Rodin, Pierre Bonnard and Chaim Soutine. Or link to Alberto Giacometti, Lucien Freud, and Frank Auerbach.

Art with a narrative. Francis Bacon's paintings are loaded with complex narratives. His work reflects an inner turmoil or struggle that essentially links to his urban studio/pub lifestyle and his sexuality. Consider also the historical context for his work in post-war Europe and more specifically Britain in the 1950s and early 1960s. Invite students to talk about the issues that most concern them today and to create art works (painting and collages etc.) that allude to these issues.

Further Reading/ resources

Francis Bacon In St Ives, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2007

Francis Bacon: A Retrospective, exhibition catalogue, Yale Centre for British Art, 1999

Brighton, Andrew, *Francis Bacon*, Tate Publishing, 2001

Burger, P, Muller, M & Zweite, *Francis Bacon: The Violence of the Real*, Thames & Hudson, 2006

Gale, Matthew, *Francis Bacon: Working on Paper*, exhibition catalogue, Tate Gallery 1999

Harrison, Martin, *In Camera: Francis Bacon: Photography, Film and the Practice of Painting*, London, 2005

Sylvester, David, *Interviews with Francis Bacon*, London, 1993 (3rd edition)

Sylvester, David, *Looking Back at Francis Bacon*, London, 2000

Bernard Leach and his Circle

Ceramics by Bernard Leach and key studio potters who worked alongside him can be seen in upper-gallery two. These works form part of the Wingfield-Digby Collection, recently bequeathed to Tate St Ives.

Key work

Tile c. 1925 23 cm square, 2 cm thick
Wingfield-Digby Collection

This stoneware tile has the design of a bird feeding its young painted in iron. It has sgraffito detailing where Leach scratched through the wet clay slip before firing. It is an excellent example of Leach's commitment to quiet, contemplative forms with soft, muted colours derived from the earth. It also shows his powerful sense of composition.

Leach would sketch his ideas before decorating his ceramics. He was an expert at combining pattern and motif with the colour and shape of each work. He had his own favourite decorations such as birds, horses and griffins and he often combined animals and plants with simple patterns and marks. Look here how he fits the curved design with the shape of the square tile. The drawing has a lightness to it that is both playful and energetic. This tile has the St Ives pottery stamp and another illegible signature in the lower corners and there are eight St Ives seals impressed on the back.

Leach set up the St Ives pottery in 1920 with fellow potter Shoji Hamada. With a team of workers and students, Leach made a range of ware that included decorative raku, and functional tableware, souvenirs and large earthenware dishes. He also produced individual pieces in stoneware such as this tile.

Bernard Leach (1887-1979). Leach spent the first ten years of his life in Hong Kong, Singapore and Japan before going to school in Britain in 1897. He studied at the Slade School of Art and in 1909 returned to Japan where he studied traditional Japanese pottery. His experience of both the East and the West meant his work included ideas, aesthetics and stylistic influences of contrasting cultures. Leach was passionate in his desire to introduce to Britain a feeling for harmony in pottery that he had learned in the Far East. At St Ives he and Hamada built the first oriental climbing kiln in the West. His sources of inspiration were wide; he studied Medieval British and Staffordshire pottery as well as Chinese, Korean and Japanese ceramics. Leach travelled extensively throughout his life and in 1940 he published his influential *A Potter's Book* outlining his philosophy and methods. He is often described as the 'father of the modern studio ceramic movement' inspiring people all over the world to value handcrafted work. Leach coined the term 'head, hand and heart' to express the sense of equilibrium and wholeness that he believed industrial societies needed to regain.

For Discussion

- There has been much discussion in recent years as to whether ceramics is an art or a craft. Leach insisted that he was an 'artist-potter' and he always regarded his individual pots as objects of art rather than craft.
- Why do you think he considered these pots more important than the standard ware (tableware)?
- What do you think the display at Tate St Ives says about the status of these objects? Are they sculptures or domestic objects?

- The Japanese critic Soetsu Yanagi complimented Leach by describing his earthenware as 'born not made'. What do you think he meant by this?
- Leach said he wanted his pots to have 'vitality' – to capture a sense of energy and life. Can you find examples that you feel have this quality?
- The simplified motif of a bird was a favourite for Leach. He considered it a symbol of freedom and peace. Can you find other motifs in his work and what do you think they symbolise?

Suggested activities

Everyday objects. Explore and discuss everyday objects such as teacups, bowls, jugs and plates. Build up a collection display of different objects. Get students to find words for shape, texture, pattern and rhythm of these objects.

Designs for pots. Students to make decorative designs for pots. Encourage them to combine pattern and form and to think carefully about how the design will suit the particular shape of the pot.

Ceramic carpets. Students to design and make individual tiles to create a 'ceramic carpet'. If clay is not available use other materials such as cardboard or wood. Experimenting with clay. Explore different clays (and other materials) and encourage students to experience and describe their individual qualities.

Firing the imagination. Look at different kilns and firing methods around the world such as raku kilns, Nigerian bush firing or paper kilns. Explore the different cultural and community contexts for these methods. If there is access to a kiln, experiment with different firing temperatures and glaze materials. Consider also making paper and cardboard kilns (see Sebastian Blackie's book *Dear Mr Leach*).

Further reading / resources

Bernard Leach Come to the Edge, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2005

Bernard Leach, Hamada and Their Circle from the Wingfield Digby Collection, Marston House, 1992

Blackie, Sebastian, *Dear Mr Leach*, A & C Black, London, 2004

Cooper, Emmanuel, *Janet Leach, A Potter's Life*, Ceramic Review, 2006

Cooper, Emmanuel, *Bernard Leach, Life and Work*, Yale University Press, 2003

Dormer, Peter, *The New Ceramics, Trends & Traditions*, Thames & Hudson, 1999

Frankel, Cyril, *Modern Pots, Hans Coper, Lucie Rie and their Contemporaries*, The Lisa Sainsbury Collection, Thames & Hudson, 2000

Janet Leach A Retrospective, exhibition catalogue, Tate St Ives, 2006

Waal, Edmund de, *Bernard Leach*, Tate Gallery Publishing, 2003

www.leachpottery.com The Leach Pottery, St Ives (Note: closed for restoration)

www.theleachpotterystives.co.uk The Leach Pottery Restoration Project

www.e-yakimono.net - Information on Japanese Pottery

www.craftscouncil.org.uk Crafts Council

www.british-museum.ac.uk British Museum

www.caa.org.uk Contemporary Applied Arts

Helen Feiler: *Capriccio*

New work by Helen Feiler is on display in the Showcase to the left of the entrance to Gallery 5.

Feiler works with silver, bronze and lumps of rock such as amethyst, aquamarine, turquoise and rock crystal. Her sculptural jewellery combines precious metals to echo the natural qualities found in stones, crystals and fossils.

Helen Feiler was born in Bristol in 1952. She is the daughter of artists Paul Feiler and June Miles and sister of potter Christine Feiler. She studied painting and printmaking at Falmouth School of Art, Gloucester College of Art and Goldsmith College in London. She spent time in the USA before establishing a studio in St Ives in the 1970s. In the 1980s she produced a collection of wallpapers designed by herself and other artists. In the 1990s she took jewellery lessons with Alex Everitt and developed a lost wax technique of jewellery making. She went on to work part time for St Just-based sculptor Paul Mount on waxes for sculptures. In 1998 Feiler set up her own gallery in Newlyn near Penzance. She has exhibited extensively since the 1970s. She currently divides her time between her home in Newlyn and the African island of Manda, off the coast of the Kenya.

For discussion

- Look closely at one of Feiler's jewels.
- Can you tell what materials it is made from and how it was made?
- What do you think it would feel like to wear?
- What type of clothing do you think this jewellery would suit?
- Does the jewellery remind you of any patterns or shapes from past art forms?
- Feiler finds many of her ideas by looking at stones, crystal and fossils – can you see any references to the natural world in these works?
- Feiler's jewellery is often described as sculptural. Why?
- Why do you think this display is called 'Capriccio'?
- This is the first time that jewellery has been displayed at Tate St Ives. Do you think it is appropriate to display jewellery in an art gallery?

Key themes

Lost wax process. Feiler has developed her own unique way of working by exploiting the lost wax process. * She learned the lost wax process in a sculptor's studio. She has always had a fascination with wax. The process allows her extreme versatility to construct jewellery as if piecing together her threads of metal.

Sculptural jewellery. Feiler's jewellery is often described as sculptural. It needs to be felt, touched and seen in the round and as with sculpture the back view is often different from the front. Each piece is self-sufficient and autonomous.

Range of references. Her references range from bronze-age Celtic chains and rings to the swirling vegetal forms of Art Nouveau and Rene Lalique. We are also reminded of Renaissance court jewellery and even some of the excesses of Victorian ornamentation.

Scale and texture. Feiler's jewels are striking for the range of textures and bold sizes she uses. She combines spiny, jagged gleaming metals with dreamy pendants and medallions. Described as trophies or weapons and 'something Boadicea might have worn', she challenges us to consider what function jewellery plays today.

Natural world. Feiler sees her jewels as microcosms of the natural world. Their forms and colours echo the patterns of rock pools, moss and fossils.

Capriccio. This word is usually associated with the musical term that defines an instrumental piece in free form and thus very lively in tempo. More generally capriccio suggests a free lively manner. Consider why this might be an appropriate title for Feiler's exhibition.

Suggested Activities

Designs for jewellery. Invite students to make their own designs for jewellery. This could include drawings and paintings as well as simple 3-D designs using modelling materials and found objects.

Designs for clothes to wear with Feiler's work. Invite students to imagine what clothes might look best worn with Feiler's jewellery.

Natural world. Feiler is inspired by the natural world. Invite students to develop and design work based on research into the natural world. Students could collect a range of source material including found objects, photographs and drawings.

Wax paintings. Feiler has always had a fascination with wax. Students could develop wax paintings exploring the effects of combining wax with paint and other materials.

Capriccio. Explore the meanings of this word. Take this word as the starting point for a project allowing the students to interpret in their own personal ways.

Further Reading

Helen Feiler's Jewellery by Hilary Spurling, Tate St Ives, 2007
www.helenfeilergallery.com

For information on the lost wax process please refer to Wikipedia or the following web sites:

- www.bronzesmith.com/bronze-info/casting.php
- www.linealatinaarte.com/lost_wax_process.htm